

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of authenticating configuration data within or about a gaming machine with respect to a gaming machine boot process, the method comprising:

providing a central processing unit for use in conjunction with the gaming machine;

providing a volatile programmable electronic device for use in conjunction with the gaming machine;

providing a configurator for use in conjunction with the gaming machine, said configurator including a read only configuration file;

providing a separate read only custodial file for use in conjunction with the gaming machine, wherein at least a substantial portion of said custodial file is identical to at least a substantial portion of said configuration file when said configuration file is authentic, said custodial file residing in a location separate from said configurator;

holding the operating contents of said volatile programmable electronic device as substantially empty upon a shut down phase of said gaming machine;

booting up said gaming machine after said shut down phase;

transferring said configuration file from said configurator to said volatile programmable electronic device;

configuring said volatile programmable electronic device with said configuration file;

comparing at least a representative portion of data from said configuration file with at least a representative portion of data from said custodial file;

confirming whether said configuration file has been successfully compared to said custodial file to a sufficient level of satisfaction; and

permitting a substantial amount of regular gaming machine operations only after a successful confirming step.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of providing a configurator includes providing a configurator that comprises a memory unit.
3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein said step of providing a configurator includes providing a configurator having a memory unit that comprises a standard Read Only Memory.
4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein said step of providing a configurator includes providing a configurator having a memory unit that comprises an Electrical Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory.
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of providing a volatile programmable electronic device includes providing a volatile programmable electronic device that comprises a Field Programmable Gate Array.
6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of providing a volatile programmable electronic device includes providing a volatile programmable electronic device that comprises a Simple Programmable Logic Device or a Complex Programmable Logic Device.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said central processing unit, said volatile programmable electronic device and said configurator all reside within the gaming machine.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said comparison step is performed by said central processing unit.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said custodial file is located within said central processing unit.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

confirming whether said configuration file has been successfully compared to said custodial file to a sufficient level of satisfaction.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said confirming step is performed prior to said transferring step.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said configurator is located within said central processing unit.

13. (Previously Presented) A microprocessor based gaming machine, comprising:

a central processing unit;

a volatile programmable electronic device;

a configurator;

a read only configuration file located within said configurator and adapted to be used in configuring said volatile programmable electronic device;

a separate custodial file located within the microprocessor based gaming machine and separate from said configurator, wherein at least a substantial portion of said separate custodial file is identical to at least a substantial portion of said configuration file; and

a comparator designed to compare at least a representative portion of data from said configuration file with at least a representative portion of data from said custodial file in order to authenticate said configuration file, said comparator adapted to provide a signal to said central processing unit regarding the results of said comparison.

14. (Original) The microprocessor based gaming machine of claim 13, wherein said volatile programmable electronic device comprises a Field Programmable Gate Array.

15. (Original) The microprocessor based gaming machine of claim 13, wherein said configurator comprises an Electrical Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory.

16. (Original) The microprocessor based gaming machine of claim 13, wherein said comparator is located within said central processing unit.

17. (Original) The microprocessor based gaming machine of claim 13, wherein said custodial file is located within said central processing unit.

18. (Original) The microprocessor based gaming machine of claim 13, wherein said configurator is located within said central processing unit.

19. (Previously Presented) A method of authenticating configuration data in a microprocessor based machine during a machine boot process, comprising:

holding the operating contents of a primary volatile programmable electronic device associated with the microprocessor based machine as substantially empty upon a shut down phase of the microprocessor based machine;

booting up the microprocessor based machine after said shut down phase;
transferring a read only configuration file from a memory device associated with the microprocessor based machine to said volatile programmable electronic device;
configuring said volatile programmable electronic device with said configuration file;
comparing at least a representative portion of data from said configuration file with at least a representative portion of data from a separate custodial file,
wherein at least a substantial portion of said separate custodial file is identical to at least a substantial portion of said configuration file,
and wherein said separate custodial file resides in a location separate from said memory device;
confirming whether said configuration file has been successfully compared to said custodial file to a sufficient level of satisfaction; and
permitting a substantial amount of regular microprocessor based machine operations only after a successful confirming step.

20. (Original) A method of authenticating data in a microprocessor based machine, comprising:

providing a CPU within with the microprocessor based machine;
providing an FPGA within with the microprocessor based machine;
providing a configuring EEPROM within with the microprocessor based machine;
storing a configuration file within said EEPROM;
storing a separate custodial file within the microprocessor based machine and separate from said EEPROM, wherein at least a substantial portion of said separate custodial file is identical to at least a substantial portion of said configuration file;

holding the operating contents of said FPGA as substantially empty upon a shut down phase of the microprocessor based machine;

booting up the microprocessor based machine;

initiating a request to transfer said configuration file from said EEPROM to said FPGA;

utilizing said CPU to compare at least a representative portion of data from said configuration file with at least a representative portion of data from a separate custodial file;

confirming whether said configuration file has been successfully compared to said custodial file to a sufficient level of satisfaction; and

configuring said FPGA with said configuration file.